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## NEWS AND NOTES

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### THE INLAND EMPIRE COUNCIL

The Inland Empire Council of Teachers of English is composed of representatives from all the northwestern mountain states from Montana west. Each of these states has its local organization, but the larger organization seems to flourish the more because of them. Like the National Council it does considerable work through committees, not depending entirely upon the annual meetings for the dissemination of intelligence or for the discovery of new and needed truths.

Its latest achievement is the publication of two bulletins upon minimal essentials. The Fifth Annual Report of the Council, upon "Minimal Essentials in Composition and Grammar for the Elementary Schools," was presented and approved at the meeting of the Inland Empire Teachers Association in April, 1920, and printed in the *Inter-mountain Educator* in May. This is now reprinted and offered for sale at cost (15 cents) by the Publicity Committee of the Council, H. E. Fowler, Lewiston, Idaho, chairman. It is a careful and complete summary of the work to be done in the grades, avowedly along the lines suggested in Sheridan's *Speaking and Writing English*.

"Minimum Requirements in the Mechanics of English Composition" is the title of the report covering the high-school field. It includes a review of the elementary work, as well as some suggestions upon literature and considerable explanation of purposes and means of the better-speech movement. It is to be obtained at the same price from the same source. The council reports that more than 15,000 copies of these documents were circulated during 1920.

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### THE PERIODICALS

#### WHAT OUR PUPILS READ

Dudley Miles reports in *High Points* for December, 1920, an "Investigation of the Outside Reading of the Pupils in the Evander Childs High School." Each teacher proposed to the class without preliminary discussion the following question: "What book read by you during the past year voluntarily outside of your school work did you enjoy most?" The pupils voted by secret ballot, the number of votes ranging from 750 in the first term to 170 in the eighth. The fact that Jack London takes first rank among the authors in the first, second, and third terms is one

of the most striking features of the results. This is due primarily to *The Call of the Wild*, which had been on the home-reading list and enthusiastically recommended by some of the readers, but in the first term there are twelve different titles by Jack London reported. *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* stands second in the second term and first in the third term, but otherwise John Fox is almost entirely neglected. Zane Grey is perhaps the most questionable author to receive much attention. He stands second in the first term, fourth in the second, and fourth in the third. The popularity of Dickens is subject to interesting variations. Third in the first term, Dickens drops out of sight until the fifth term, when he reappears as second and then is again submerged, only to take first rank in both the seventh and eighth terms. Dr. Miles's purpose was largely to find out the influence of the classroom work upon the home reading. This case of Dickens casts some light upon the problem. It is during the sixth term, when Dickens suffers his eclipse, that the *Tale of Two Cities* is studied in class. His popularity in the eighth term is due chiefly to *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. Dr. Miles is entirely justified in urging that more of us make similar investigations and study more intensively than we have ever done the exact effect of our classroom instruction upon the reading habits of our children. At present we are blindly hoping for the results which we desire, not knowing whether we secure them or whether any changes in our method would increase our effectiveness.

#### A LIBRARIAN'S PHILOSOPHY

"A Working Philosophy for Librarians" presented in *Public Libraries* for February, 1921, by Willis H. Kerr has three cardinal points: (1) The public library is a very powerful agency of education, perhaps more mighty than the public schools. (2) It is the business of the library to meet the needs of the students by securing, before the demand comes, all the books that will be required. (3) It is equally the business of the library to whet the intellectual appetite and stimulate the curiosity of those who come within its reach, so that they will continue their education by means of reading. The public library should, like the school, make "things as simple as ABC and also as elusive as a wraith of fog on the mountain."

#### PROGRESS IN THREE DIRECTIONS

The *Elementary School Journal* for January, 1921, contains three articles worthy the attention of the English specialist. Of most general interest perhaps is W. F. Clark's "Writing Vocabularies," an account

of an experiment testing the reliability of the Ayres selection of the thousand most common words. His results seem to show that many more similar investigations are needed before we shall be able to say with anything like finality which are the words most used and needed by the ordinary person. Particularly Mr. Clark points out the influence of locality, of social class, and of vocation in modifying the individual's diction.

C. J. Anderson and Elda Merton supplement their account of "Remedial Work in Silent Reading" originally given in the June, 1920, issue. Assuming the diagnosis described in the earlier article, they go on to describe typical procedures for curing the defects. The fundamental principle seems to be that of having children work individually or in relatively small groups. The reading recitation, as we have known it, practically disappears. A great deal of use is made of individual selections cut from worn-out readers and old magazines. This material is used for drill both in comprehension and in pronunciation. Phonics, also, is given a considerable amount of attention, as are phrase drills to increase speed.

Myrtle L. Kaufman tells of "Planning the Use of Varied Reading Materials." As a supervisor she has prepared for her teachers comments upon the uses to which the various selections in the supplementary readers available in her system may be put. The article is made up largely of samples of such comments. There is no reason why the individual teacher or a group of teachers in the same building or system should not co-operatively work out a series of comments quite as valuable as those furnished by this supervisor.

#### AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION

The first two articles in the *Educational Review* for January, 1921, set forth the ultra-progressive and the moderate conservative views of education. Stanwood Cobb, in stating "The Essentials of Progressive Education," lays emphasis upon the modern faith in the child soul and its inherent love of progress and knowledge; upon the desire of the modern educator to inculcate not so much knowledge as love of knowledge; and upon our present belief that the emotions can be satisfactorily trained only in an atmosphere of freedom.

W. C. Bagley, answering the question "Are the Older School Virtues Obsolescent?" points out the danger in the common interpretation of the doctrine of interest. He fears that in catering to the pupil's interests we shall let his whims dominate us and shall not insist upon thoroughness in any direction. He evidently regrets the passing of the older

ideal of insuring independence of thought first through insuring an understanding of what was learned. He goes on to quote Thorndike to show that the real foundation for originality lies in thorough mastery of subject-matter already produced. Finally, he predicts that "the systematic mastery of race experience, illuminated, but by no means replaced, by the problematic method of teaching, will be recognized as a primary aim of education; that persistent and dogged application to set tasks will retain its position as a fundamental school virtue."

May we not so stimulate our children as to have *both* freedom *and* dogged application to the task undertaken?

#### EDUCATION ABROAD

The article on "International Relations in Education" by Wilford M. Aikin in *School and Society* for January 15 contains two almost entirely separate sections. In the first the author summarizes his impressions of education in England. (1) The English have class education. (2) They possess a tradition and atmosphere of scholarship superior to ours. (3) They succeed in getting their real scholars into the direct public service. (4) America is really the hope of the world, educationally as well as otherwise, because we are so much less bound by tradition.

The latter half of his article is devoted to the problem of securing a better understanding among nations. He advocates two methods: a conference of the secondary-school men of the great nations—perhaps twenty-five from each—to discuss the aims of education held by each people and so to bring about a better understanding among the molders of public sentiment all over the world; and also an exchange of secondary-school instructors, much like that already in vogue among the colleges.

James F. Hosic tells in the February *Journal of the National Education Association* of the "Educational Trend in Europe." After describing his work for the Red Cross already reported in the *English Journal*, he speaks of the spirit animating the educational leaders of the various countries. In almost every one he finds very progressive legislation is on hand and that the school men are trying to make more democratic their method. Even in France, which is the most conservative of all the Allies, he finds outspoken demand for a democratic school system. The article closes with the following statement in italics:

While the political and economic reactionaries both at home and abroad are looking backward and prating of the human nature that will not change and the inevitableness of things as they were, the school men are dreaming dreams of a new and better world and are working unremittingly to make their dreams come true.